

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 18, and 20 have been objected to as containing informalities; Claims 1, 16-18, and 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by McNeal et al., Claims 2-7, 11, and 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over McNeal et al. in view of Noik et al. and Claims 8-10 and 13-15 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 3, 8, and 20 have been canceled, without prejudice, and thus, Claims 1, 2, 4-7, and 9-19 remain active.

Considering next then Examiner's objection to Claims 1, 18, and 20 as containing informalities, it is to be noted that Claims 1 and 18 have been appropriately amended to overcome the informalities noted by the Examiner while Claim 20 has been canceled, without prejudice. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration of Claims 1 and 18 is respectfully requested.

Considering next then the rejection of Claims 1, 16-18, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by McNeal et al., it is to be noted that Claim 1 has now been amended to incorporate all the limitations of objected to Claims 3 and 8 and Claim 18 has been amended so as to incorporate the limitations contained within former Claim 8, now canceled. In addition, as noted above, Claim 20 has now been canceled, without prejudice. In view of the foregoing and in view of the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 8-10, and 13-15, it is submitted that Claims 1, 16-18, and 20 now merit indication of allowability.

Considering next then the Examiner's rejection of Claims 2-7, 11, and 12 as being unpatentable over McNeal et al. in view of Noik et al., it is submitted that based upon the foregoing arguments with respect to the allowability of Claim 1 as now amended, Claims 2-7, 11, and 12 also merit indication of allowability. It is further submitted that Claims 2-7, 11, and 12 contain limitations not shown by the prior art of record and that such claim is therefore merit indication of allowability based both upon the limitations set forth therein and based upon their dependency directly or indirectly upon Claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, an early and favorable Office Action is believed to be in order and the same is hereby respectfully requested.

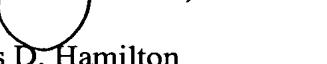
Respectfully submitted,

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